

problem, at least until another specialist checks the patient out, when the problem then becomes a suspected disease in that specialty."

I realized then that the Medical Student's Disease might not end with graduation. The symptoms I was projecting on myself could later all too easily become projected onto my

patients. In a profession approached with such intensity, psychological limits were reached as easily as physical ones. Unless I learned to counterbalance my work with outside interests, the power of suggestion might become an inescapable occupational hazard.

I decided to rehydrate with a weekend off.

## THE HOURGLASS

*for Edwin M. Kinderman, PhD  
Hanford, Washington*

You thought  
your Peggy would go first,  
with her pig's valve  
and her strokes, but now

you steer  
your own frail wagon  
between invisible arrows  
and poison darts  
that might subdue renegades,  
but not before they  
(renegades, rays or drugs)  
kill you.

You read  
statistics to guess your odds,  
your ruminating mind  
hungry for a new field  
in which to browse.

You listen  
for genetic messages  
whose code was broken  
with the wrong cipher book.

You listen  
to your body as it cries  
its loudest since  
your wailing infancy.

You listen  
for outlaws escaping cells  
to range in other districts  
of your traumatized city,  
no sirens to pursue them.

You wait  
with your nuclear family  
for the hot sands of Hanford  
to run through the glass.

You wonder  
how far *Amanita* spores  
have blown on half-life winds  
to cloud your horizon,  
a fairy ring rippling  
from the center of decay.

DAVID OLSEN  
*Palo Alto, California*